

# ARNOLD ARBORETUM

## HARVARD UNIVERSITY



# BULLETIN

## OF

# POPULAR INFORMATION

JAMAICA PLAIN, MASS.

MAY 9, 1921

**Some late-flowered Crabapples.** The cool weather of late April and early May has favored the flowers of Crabapples, and although the petals have already fallen from the trees of *Malus robusta*, *M. sylvestris* and some of the forms of *M. baccata*, many of the earlier species are still in good condition and others are fast opening their flowers. A few of the late-flowering species and hybrids which deserve the attention of garden-makers and the lovers of handsome plants are:

***Malus spectabilis***, a tree which has been long cultivated in Chinese gardens, although it is still unknown as a wild plant. This tree, which is possibly a hybrid, was first sent to England from Canton in 1780 and probably was brought to the United States early in the nineteenth century. It is one of the largest of the Asiatic Crabs here, growing to the height of from twenty-five to thirty feet and forming a wide, vase-shaped crown of numerous spreading and ascending branches and short branchlets. The flowers are pale pink, semidouble and very fragrant. The abundant fruits are pale yellow, nearly globose and an inch in diameter. This is a hardy and long-lived tree, as in the neighborhood of Boston are plants which are probably seventy-five or eighty years old.

***Malus Sargentii*** is a Japanese shrub only a few feet high, and much broader than it is tall, with wide-spreading prostrate branches. The flowers are in crowded clusters, saucer-shaped and pure white, and are followed by abundant wine-colored fruits which are covered with a slight bloom, and, unless eaten by birds, do not disappear until the

leaves begin to appear the following spring. The unusual habit of this plant makes it useful for covering slopes and banks, or to form an edging to beds of taller shrubs. With abundant space it may be expected to form a bush eighteen or twenty feet in diameter.

**Malus Sieboldii** is a Japanese species with the leaves at the end of vigorous branches deeply three-lobed. It grows in two forms; as a shrub only three or four feet high with wide-spreading and arching stems, and as a small tree (var. *arborescens*) with a well-formed trunk and horizontal branches which form a rather flat-topped head. This is the last of the Asiatic Crabapples in the collection to flower and only a few of the bright red flower-buds are open. The flowers are small, white, and produced in profusion every year. The fruit is not larger than a small pea, and is bright red on some plants and yellow on others. What has been considered a variety of *Malus Sieboldii* (var. *calocarpa*) is a larger growing plant with larger flowers which open ten or twelve days earlier and are rose pink, finally becoming white; the fruit is much larger, bright red, lustrous and persistent. This plant produces large crops of flowers and fruits every year and in both spring and autumn it is one of the handsomest of the Asiatic Crabapples. It is not known as a wild plant in Japan and is probably exceedingly rare in cultivation in western countries. For this beautiful plant the Arboretum is indebted to Dr. William Sturgis Bigelow of Boston who brought the seeds from Japan in 1889.

**Malus sublobata.** This is believed to be a hybrid and it has been suggested that it is the result of a cross between *Malus prunifolia rinki* and *M. Sieboldii*. The plants in the Arboretum are of very uncertain origin but it is probable that they were raised from seeds sent from Japan, although for several years and until the plant flowered they were supposed to be *Malus sikkimensis*. The Arboretum trees are already thirty feet high and, unlike other Crabapples, form a tall trunk covered with pale bark and a narrow head, and in shape are not unlike a young Ash or Tulip-tree. The large white flowers are chiefly produced on upper branches and are followed by bright clear yellow fruits about three-quarters of an inch in diameter. No other Crabapple in the collection produces such beautiful yellow fruit. For the beauty of its fruit, its unusual habit, vigor and rapid growth, *Malus sublobata* is well worth the attention of planters.

**Malus Soulardii** is believed to be a hybrid of the Apple-tree of eastern Europe (*M. pumila*) and of the wild Crab of the Mississippi valley, *Malus ioensis*, and trees of this hybrid are not rare in the woods in the region from Indiana to Iowa. In the Arboretum *Malus Soulardii* is a round-headed tree in shape like its eastern parent; the flowers are pink, and smaller than those of either parent; the fruit is green, depressed-globose, from an inch to two and a half inches in diameter, and without the waxy exudation which is found on the fruit of the Crabapples of eastern North America. The trees are covered with flowers this year. As a natural hybrid of much interest and as a flowering plant *Malus Soulardii* is well worth a place in collections of these trees. As fruit trees this hybrid and its American parent are worth growing, for jelly made from the fruit of the Iowa Crabapple



is superior in flavor, clearness and beauty to that which has been made from other Apples. A single plant will furnish a family with a year's supply of jelly, and will prove a good investment on any farm or in any garden. If the writer in a recent issue of a Boston newspaper who, in discussing Crabapple trees, was unable to find a good word for the fruit of *Malus ioensis* will visit the Arboretum in October he shall be supplied, in the interest of public education, with enough of these apples to test their value when made into jelly.

**Double-flowered Cherry-trees.** Small plants of a few of the Japanese double-flowered Cherry-trees are blooming this year and show what may be expected of these trees in this climate. The handsomest of them and probably the ones which can be most successfully grown in this climate are forms of *Prunus serrulata*, which in Japan is a large timber tree, and has been growing for many years in the Arboretum (the Sargent Cherry). The handsomest of the double-flowering Cherries this year is the var. *albo-rosea*, the Shirofugen of the Japanese. This is a perfectly hardy plant with semidouble flowers and petals pink in the bud, but becoming white when the flowers open. This is the double-flowered Cherry which has been sent in considerable numbers to the United States by Japanese nurseries, and is not rare in American gardens where in colder parts of the country than eastern Massachusetts it is perfectly hardy. Other varieties of these Cherries which are blooming well this year are the var. *sekiyama*, the Kanzan or Kwanzan of the Japanese found by Wilson in gardens at Arakawa, near Tokyo, in the Province of Musashi; it has large, double, rich rose-colored flowers. By Wilson, who has seen them all, the Sekiyam is considered the handsomest of all the double-flowered Japanese Cherry-trees; and the var. *jugenzo*, better known in European gardens as "James H. Veitch" with rose pink flowers and young leaves of a deep bronze color, like those of *Prunus serrulata* var. *sachalinensis* of which it is also a form. These Cherry-trees are on the right hand side of the Forest Hills Road. The flowers are heavy and hang on long, slender stalks, and are easily broken off by heavy winds which have already done a great deal of damage to them this spring. They should be planted in a more sheltered place than the north side of the Forest Hills Road, and the duration of the flowers would be lengthened if the trees could be surrounded by a belt of conifers.

**Diervilla florida.** This Korean plant is one of the species which has played an important part in the evolution of the Diervillas or Weigelias of gardens, and many of its hybrids and varieties have been propagated by nurserymen. The wild type of the species, if it is still cultivated in Europe, is a rare plant, and the Arboretum is fortunate in having raised plants from the seeds collected by Wilson during his recent journey in Korea. These are now flowering for the first time and their pure pink flowers promise to make it one of the most attractive of all the Diervillas. It has bloomed three or four days earlier than its variety *venusta*, another Korean plant, which until this spring has been the first Diervilla in the collection to flower. This variety has generally been considered here the handsomest of all Diervillas, but the flowers are not as pure pink as those of the type.

**Diervilla Middendorffiana** var. **Maximowiczii** is flowering this year on Hickory Path near Centre Street. This is the Japanese variety of the yellow-flowered *Diervilla* of eastern Siberia and northern Japan, and a common shrub on the mountain slopes of central Hondo where it grows from five to fifteen feet tall. The large pale yellow or yellowish green flowers are attractive but not as showy as those of the species with more highly colored flowers. The Siberian form just lives here, and has resisted the efforts of more than twenty years to induce it to bloom in the Arboretum.

**American Azaleas.** These begin to bloom about two weeks later than the earliest Asiatic species, and of the sixteen species only seven with several varieties are hardy in New England. These in the order of their flowering are *Rhododendron canadense*, the *Rhodora*, *R. Vaseyi*, *R. roseum*, *R. nudiflorum*, *R. arborescens*, *R. calendulaceum*, and *R. viscosum*. The other species are confined to the extreme southern states; with one species endemic in Florida, another in Alabama, one in the Arkansas-Texas region, and one in California. It is interesting that eight species, one-half of all the species which have been found in America, grow in the state of Georgia which contains a larger number of species of these plants than any other region of equal extent. Plants of all the American species are in the Arboretum nurseries or have been raised here with the exception of *Rhododendron alabamense* of which seeds have not yet been collected; and some of the southern species, although not for northern gardens, like *R. prunifolium* with crimson flowers, the scarlet flowered *R. speciosum* and the yellow flowered *R. austrinum*, may be expected to become popular garden plants wherever they find a suitable climate. The handsomest of the species hardy at the north, and when in flower one of the most beautiful shrubs of the North American flora, is the Appalachian *R. calendulaceum* with its yellow or flame-colored flowers which do not open until the leaves are nearly fully grown. Another species of the southern Appalachian Mountains, *R. Vaseyi*, with pure pink flowers which have already opened has proved a good garden plant at the north. Of the species, however, with rose-colored or pink flowers *R. roseum* is even a handsomer plant than *R. Vaseyi*. Although first distinguished and named in France as early as 1812, it has always been confused in this country with other species until quite recent years, and has never received the attention which it deserves. It is a shrub from three to fifteen feet tall with rose-colored flowers which open after the leaves begin to unfold, and are more fragrant even than those of *R. viscosum*. This Azalea is common in southern New England and southward to Virginia; it grows in western New York, northeastern Ohio, southeastern Illinois and the adjacent part of Missouri, that is in regions of limestone soil, and the fact that it can grow in lime makes it possible to cultivate it in parts of the country where other *Rhododendrons* cannot grow. There is a group of these plants on the right hand side of the Meadow Road in front of the Lindens.

**Lilacs** are fast opening their flower-buds. There will not be as many flowers as usual this year on many varieties of the common Lilac, but the plants of the New Chinese species are well covered with buds.